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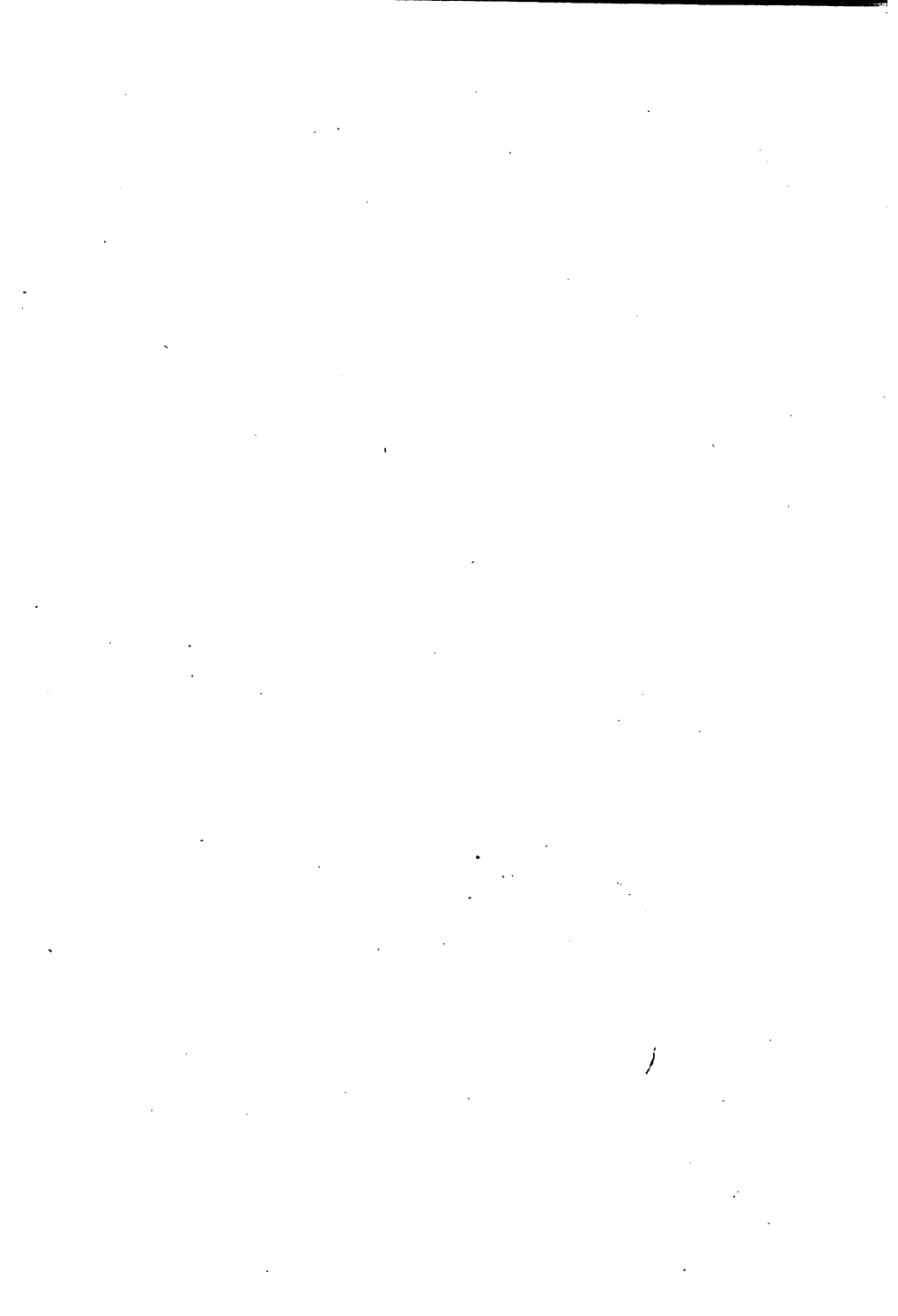
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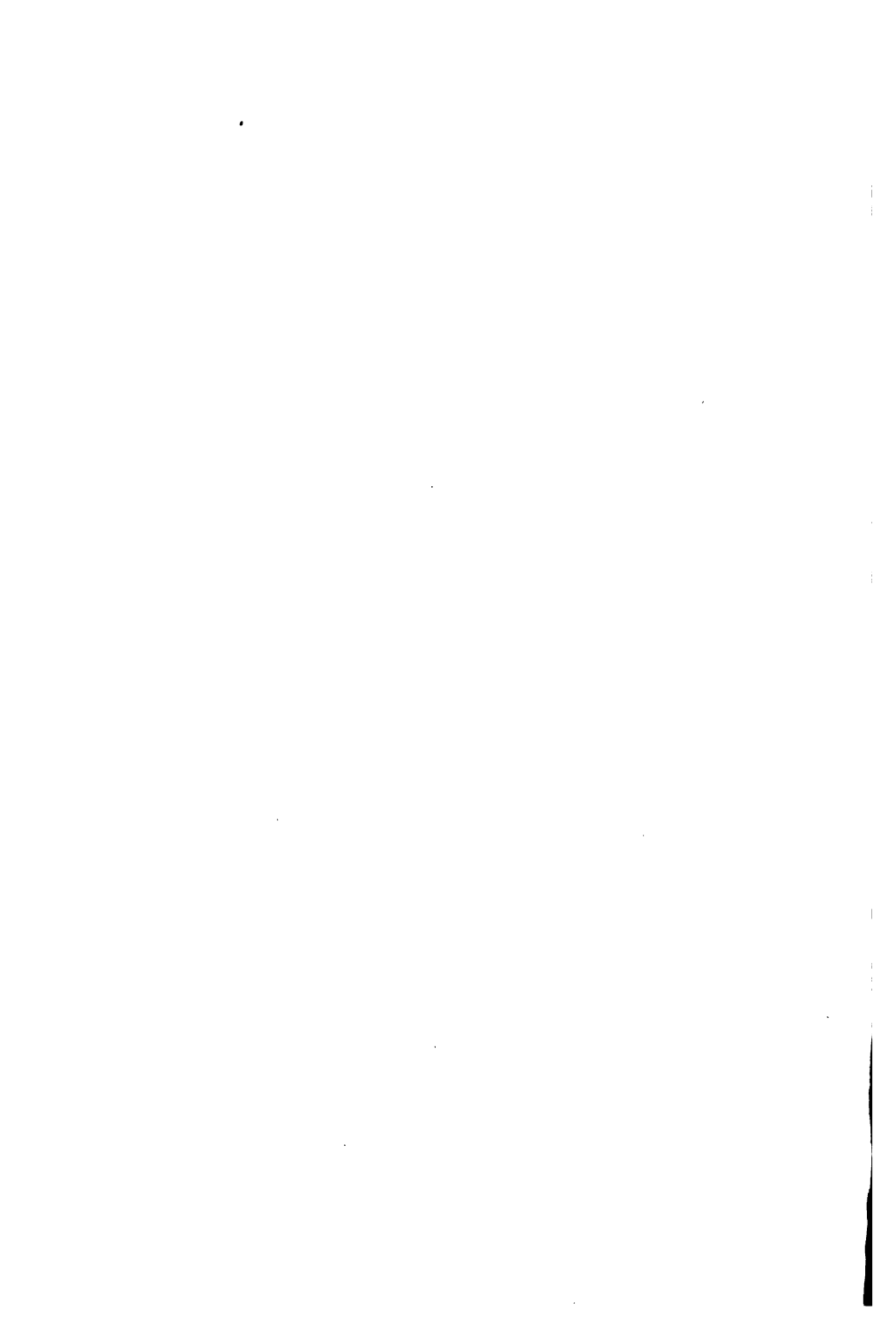
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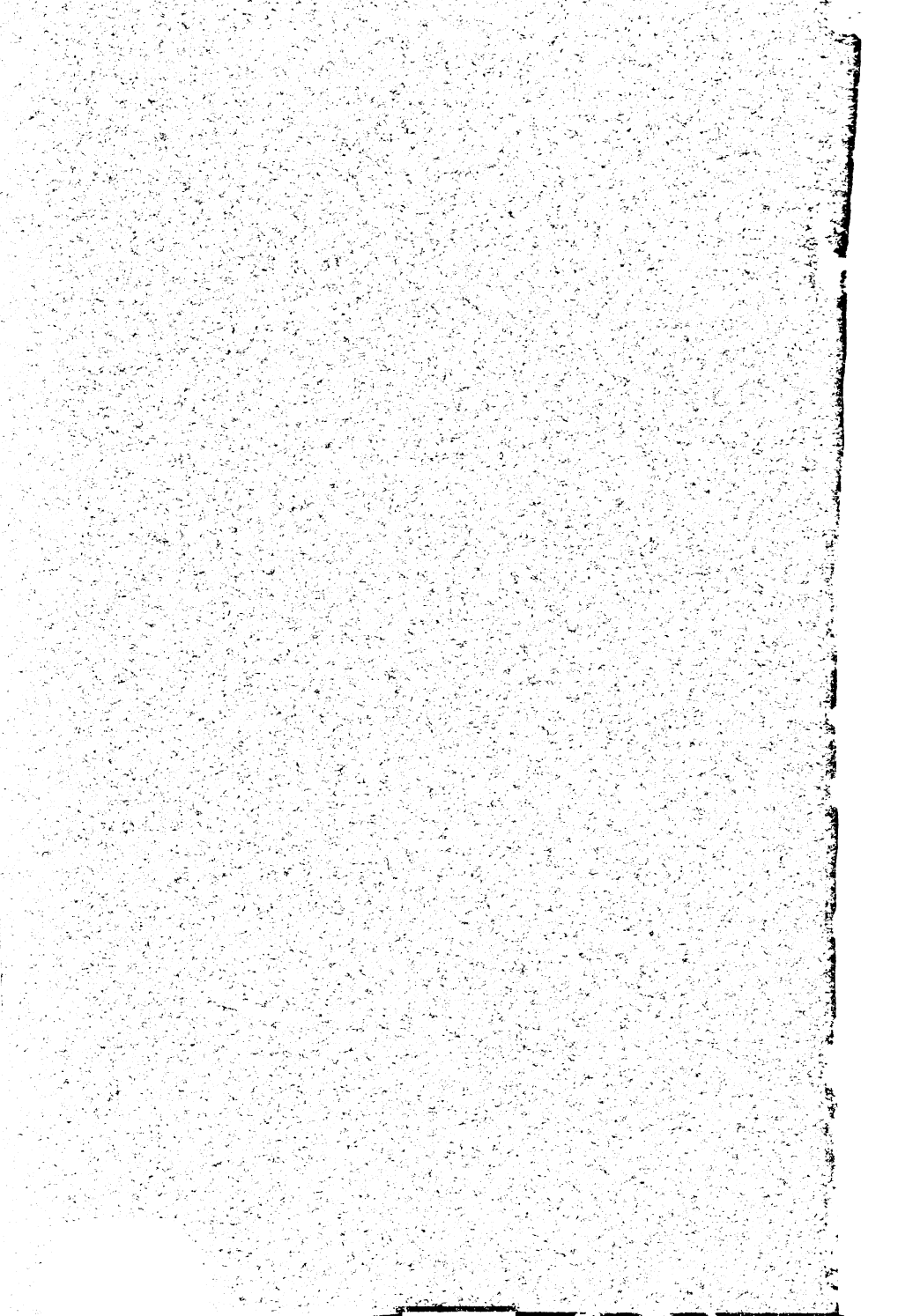




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IPHIGENIA
A PLAY





IPHIGENIA.



IPHIGENIA

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

CHARLES S. ELGUTTER,
(A. B., HARVARD.)

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

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the Author*

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"That Greece may live, let Ipbigenia die."



CHARACTERS.

AGAMEMNON—*King of Argos and Mycenae, General of the Greek army at Aulis.*

MENELAUS.—*King of Lacedaemon, brother of Agamemnon and husband of Helen.*

ULYSSES.—*King of Ithaca, the wisest among the Greeks.*

NESTOR.—*King of Pylos, the silver-tongued orator.*

ACHILLES.—*Prince of Phthia, chief of the Myrmidons.*

CALCHAS.—*Priest of Apollo.*

THERSITES.—*A deformed camp-follower.*

PATROCLUS.—*Friend of Achilles.*

AJAX—

PHOCIAN—

MERIONES—

DIOMEDES—

PHILOCTETES—

Greek chiefs.

IPHIGENIA

Iphigenia, Achilles and Clytemnestra are thereby made the innocent victims of a cruel plot. The true condition of affairs is soon revealed, and not until the dire prophecy of Calchas is fulfilled and Iphigenia falls a sacrifice is the Greek army permitted to sail away from Aulis to make war on Troy.





PROEM.

The Aulis episode in the Trojan war does not appear in Homer. But that Iphigenia was a favorite with the Greeks is certain from the several versions of the unhappy fate of Agamemnon's daughter, a congenial theme with the later poets.

The accepted story is preserved in Euripides, the father of dramatic realism. His Iphigenia became the most widely known play in the ancient world and best understood of all the Greek tragedies by reason of its comprehension of human nature.

Both Racine and Schiller in modern times recognized the possibilities of Iphigenia at Aulis as a theme of world interest. But the sonorous verse of the former, though original, has not found favor out of the atmosphere of classic French tragedy. On the other hand, Schiller gave to his play all the naturalness and heart feeling of Euripides; but unfortunately it is a translation preserving the form and lines, even to the chorus of the original, a method unadapted to modern dramatic art.

IPHIGENIA

Nestor, honest but senile, living on his past reputation.

Thersites, coarse and vulgar, fickle and heartless, reflecting the lust for spoil promised the soldiers at the fall of Troy.

Clytemnestra, motherly and matronly.

Iphigenia, tender and womanly, spiritual minded, imbued with high sense of duty.

The splendid success of Mr. Stephen Phillips' Ulysses, and the recent revivals and interpretations of the story of Paolo and Francesca give promise for the future. Iphigenia knocks at the door and humbly prays she may find favor and a place in this renaissance.

C. S. E.

Omaha, Neb., 1902.



“More than the gods we mortals must endure.”



THE INCIDENTS.

THE FIRST ACT.

The Greek camp at Aulis before Agamemnon's tent.

THE SECOND ACT.

The First Scene—The interior of Agamemnon's tent.

The Second Scene—The parade grounds of the army.

THE THIRD ACT.

The banks of a beautiful stream near Agamemnon's pavilion.

THE FOURTH ACT.

A plain near the sea shore.







THE FIRST ACT.

The Greek Camp at Aulis.

A rocky promontory juts out to sea. The Greek fleet in the bay with ships in the water, others drawn up on the sand. The white tents of the army extend from the mainland toward the beach.

Agamemnon's tent with the King's ensign showing the device of a swan displayed to the right. A sunburnt grassy plain in the foreground. Trees with seared leaves. The Sun is rising out of the sea. Light fleecy clouds on the horizon which disappear with the rising sun. The sky appears brassy and hot. A sentinel paces before the King's tent. A mariner on the promontory scans the heavens.

SENTINEL.

[Pauses.]

What signs, mariner?

MARINER.

The same as yesterday.

The Sun drives fleecy clouds like sheep.

SENTINEL.

Clouds—Where?

IPHIGENIA

MARINER.

Mere wisps within his path.

SENTINEL.

No wind, no hope.

MARINER.

[*Coming down.*]

Full thirty years have I as helmsman followed
The crooks and headlands of this Island coast,
Weathered each fretful mood of the Euripian
sea,

In landcraft and seacraft well schooled,
But ne'er endured before, earth, sky and sea
Gripped in a brazen vise,
The air pestilent—a thousand ships becalmed.

SENTINEL.

Three months at sandy Aulis,
How long shall the idling Greeks await
A favoring gale?

MARINER.

I am no seer, only seafaring man.
Consult the soothsayers, they supplicate each day
To break the spell, the gods be willing.

[*Exit.*]

[*Enter a Myrmidon.*]

SENTINEL.

[*Halting him.*]

Thy name and business.

THE MYRMIDON.

Chiron, the Myrmidon, I seek the King.

IPHIGENIA

SENTINEL.

The hour is early and the General sleeps.
Report thy business—I am his faithful.

THE MYRMIDON.

My Lord Achilles bid me say,
To-day he'll forage.
Our camp lacks meat, our braves need stimulus—
The lists of the dead, Alexander, Milo, Jason,
Brave Captains of the guards, peace to their
souls.
Many shield-bearers as well stricken at night.

SENTINEL.

[*Receiving the lists.*]
So shall it be reported.

THE MYRMIDON.

[*Saluting.*]
Long live, Agamemnon.

[*Exit.*]

SENTINEL.

[*Saluting.*]
Long live, Achilles.

[*Exit.*]

[*Enter soothsayers with religious emblems.*
They make observations of the sea and sky
and the flight of the birds.]

SOOTHSAYERS.

[*Chanting.*]
Into the air
This chalice of Castalian water throw,
[*They turn to the west.*]
Blow Zepherus,

IPHIGENIA

Soft wind of the West favoring blow ;
[*They turn to the south.*]
Pressed from the sacred stream
That from Parnassus flows,
Blow Notus,
Moist wind of the South soothing blow.
[*They turn to the north.*]
Into the sea
This flagon of sweetened blood we throw,
Blow Boreas,
Wild wind of the North blustering blow ;
[*They turn to the east.*]
Caught from the untamed bulls
That on Mount Cynthus grow,
Blow Eurus,
Cold wind of the East, eagerly blow.

FIRST SOOTHSAYER.

Be ye appeased, O air, O sea.

SECOND SOOTHSAYER.

These offerings from Agamemnon, King of
men.

THIRD SOOTHSAYER.

Phoebus Apollo, god of the shining sun,
O turn aside thy arrows barbed with death.
[*A swan is perceived winging her flight gracefully toward the sea.*]

FIRST SOOTHSAYER.

The swan!

SECOND SOOTHSAYER.

Bird of augury.

IPHIGENIA

THIRD SOOTHSAYER.

Mark well her graceful flight.

FIRST SOOTHSAYER.

She rides the glossy sea.

SECOND SOOTHSAYER.

Thrice in the brine she dips her beak.

THIRD SOOTHSAYER.

Deep in the cool green wave she laves her breast.

FIRST SOOTHSAYER.

Ha, see!

All ruffled now her plumage.

SECOND SOOTHSAYER.

Hark, her shrill cries.

FIRST SOOTHSAYER.

Frenzied she beats her wings,

In vain attempts to rise.

See, see, how fierce the struggle.

THIRD SOOTHSAYER.

What monster holds her in remorseless grip?

SECOND SOOTHSAYER.

The sea is flecked into a crimson tide.

FIRST SOOTHSAYER.

O frightful spectacle!

SECOND SOOTHSAYER.

'Tis whipped to foam in her death strangle.

THIRD SOOTHSAYER.

Alas, this blood-bedabbled plume alone

Remains mute witness of her unhappy fate.

IPHIGENIA

FIRST SOOTHSAYER.

Is not the cygnet's wing Agamemnon's emblem?

SECOND SOOTHSAYER.

At once to Calchas.

No sparrow falls without its divination,
Apollo's priest alone may read the omen.

FIRST SOOTHSAYER.

No prayers, no sacrifices move the gods,
Is this the sign to light our way to Troy?

THIRD SOOTHSAYER.

To Calchas haste, momentous is this day.

[*Exeunt.*]

[*The Myrmidons are heard in the distance with
pipe and drum playing a quickstep.*]

[*Enter Ulysses, Nestor, Thersites.*]

THERSITES.

D'ye hear 'em, d'ye hear 'em, Nuncle?

There they go, there, there,—

Brawlers, wrestlers, gamesters, fighters, [*mim-
ics.*]

And at their head, by Bacchus, Achilles.

Peacock, I dub him, aye to his face, peacock.

Plumes in his helmet, horse-hair tufts. So.

[*Mimics.*]

There's mettle for ye, there's a fighting-god

For wenching Paris.

But if things don't mend he's likeliest to rot

In Aulis before he sights Troy-town.

NESTOR.

Silence chatterer.

IPHIGENIA

U L Y S S E S.

Your breath offends.

T H E R S I T E S.

Offends ye. The rank scurvy of the camp

Offends me. Stinks in my nose.

I tell ye, the plague if not stopt

Will send more souls to hell

Than'll fall at Ilium.

Ye'll not listen—Well, well,

Ye'll give ear soon 'nough

When the lads come tumbling through your
tents.

N E S T O R.

What would you, Thersites—

Have not the generals cares enough?

T H E R S I T E S.

What would I, O sap-head, what would I?

Ye gods of hell, what would you?

We spear-hurlers—I speak of my comrades in
arms,—

Yea, tho' I draw my rations as camp-follower,

I voice the rank and file—

We spear-hurlers impatient to break camp,

Quit Aulis,—Sail Troyward.

N E S T O R.

'Tis true as reported, you are hatching mutiny.

T H E R S I T E S.

River of hell, isn't there cause?

I haven't told the half.

But ye'll not see our plight,

Nor hear our plaint.

IPHIGENIA

Was it to bleach our bones on these hot sands
We quitted Greece?
Forsooth not Menelaus bawd but Trojan gaud
We hanker after. What asses, we,
Cheated with promise of Priam's gold,
Dragged with an army halter out of Greece,
Dumped on this cursed isle.

U L Y S S E S.

You scandal breeder, what roguery now?

N E S T O R.

Why exaggerate the discomfiture,
Anon our ships will plow Troyward,
Then your recompense will be tenfold.

T H E R S I T E S.

We'll plow our graves in hell first.

U L Y S S E S.

Hark ye, slanderer,
I'll have you flogged howling through the camp.

T H E R S I T E S.

Am I beholden to you Ithacan?
Strip my back, but I'll not hold my tongue.

U L Y S S E S.

My anger you will tempt, jabbering ape.
[*Strikes him.*]

T H E R S I T E S.

Oh, Oh, hold off your filthy blows.

N E S T O R.

Bear with him, Ulysses.
The untoward delay breeds impatience in our
youth.

IPHIGENIA

Thersites, hold your tongue. Preach moderation.

Are not the divinations consulted daily?

The gods appeased the tardy winds will bluster
Freighting our ships full sail Troyward.

TERSITES.

Fair words to fill our belly,

But foul knocks to crack our head.

Nestor, we be fed too long on wind.

At once to Troy or home,—tell that the King.

ULYSSES.

More insolence, crooked-tongued rascal,

And to our faces. Scandalous.

Who gave you leave to speak for the army

Agamemnon, Menelaus?

How many shield bearers did you induct to the
war?

Nestor, this blatant demagogue will take command,

Lay down the terms of service, and we perforce,
Must take his orders like ass-drivers.

NESTOR.

A privileged character, you,

Too much indulged and humored.

Your acrid wit exciting laughter has been endured,

A busybody bent on mischief always,

But now an end to forbearance.

Arrogance, meddle not with things forbidden.

TERSITES.

To hell with threats, a plague on both of ye.

IPHIGENIA

U L Y S S E S.

Begone wretch, lest my arm warms you anew.

T H E R S I T E S.

Spit your venom,
May Zeus confound you all,
Too late ye'll learn the mischief will undo ye.
[*Exit.*]

N E S T O R.

Yes, I am troubled over much, Ulysses,
The wretch speaks truth indeed.

U L Y S S E S.

The spawning of this scum disturbs thee?
Would I had cracked his sconce,
Then could he nurse his own and not the general ill.

N E S T O R.

The calm, the plague, the enforced delay,
The fretting chiefs, the restless troops,
Our souls grown sick, our bodies cramped with pain,
These augur ill.
What others dread in thought
This garrulous camp-follower babbles.

U L Y S S E S.

What is, is, and patiently must be endured.
Armed for the fray I am not one discouraged.

N E S T O R.

More mystery here than man can fathom,
Nor priest nor oracler unravel.

IPHIGENIA

U L Y S S E S.

The gods look to their own concerns,
And man's deserts move them but little.

N E S T O R.

A doubter I know thee of old.
But when the snow of four score years
Shall frost thy head, and thou hast seen,—but
no—

Long suffering are the gods, offend them not,
Full measure they exact. Agamemnon—

U L Y S S E S.

How, Agamemnon at fault for the ills
Of the Greeks, the stress of the weather?

N E S T O R.

So read my thoughts.

U L Y S S E S.

Now like a woman my curiosity's aroused.

N E S T O R.

O scoff no more. Attend.
When yet a princeling in his father's house
Agamemnon was a lusty youth and eager for
The clamorous chase and frolic venturesome.
I was his tutor and his boon companion,
For royal Atreus trusted me his son.
One summer's day together we had stalked
A wild buck in the woody depths that crest
The heights of Mount Cithaeron, sacred hill
To Artemis. There hot we tracked the panting
beast
Atop the rugged slope where tangled boughs
Of the wild olive make a fragrant den.

IPHIGENIA

Nor eye nor ear had we to sight or sound
Save for the pronghorn challenging pursuit.
And now the royal beast within our leash,
And now sheer cunning he outwits attack,
Just as the Prince had poised his spear to lunge.
Within a nearby bosk he disappeared,
And Agamemnon, lest the prey escape,
With all his power hurls his shivering spear
Full tilt upon the fast retreating stag.—
Most frightful deed, most wretched day. Alas!

ULYSSES.

Nay, Nestor, thy tale would be diverting,
Did not thy mien and startled face betray.
To slay the fleet foot deer should not cause
sighs.

NESTOR.

Odysseus, thou art friend of mine,
I may confide to thee what has remained
A sealed and silent thought these many years.
The dart so luckless hurtled at the deer
Pierced not alone the hunted beast but found
A lodgment trist within the quivering breast
Of Artemis' unhappy priestess.

ULYSSES.

Ah.—

NESTOR.

Hermione her name. Within that deep retreat,
As is the custom of the cult who serve
The virgin fair, Hermione beloved
And priestess of the queenly Artemis,
Absorbed within the secret mysteries, .

IPHIGENIA

Was struck to earth by the deadly javelin.
Horror seized us at the impious act—
The penalty is death to him who slays
The person sacred to the immortal gods,
Nor absolution that the deed be done
Unwittingly.—The stripling at my side
Scarce understood his foul and fearful crime.
'Twas I alone to comprehend its portent.
And charging each by fearful oath of secrecy
We tombd the priestess at the altar's foot,
And spread the rumor current from that day
A savage beast had gored Hermione
Ere we could slay him in his bloody rage.

U L Y S S E S.

The half forgotten tale I do recall,—
To the effect, Agamemnon overcame
A stag of Artemis.

N E S T O R.

The same.

U L Y S S E S.

Well, what of that,
Agamemnon lives and thrives, a puissant King,
The Captain of united Greece,
A thousand ships at his command,
The flower of Greece within his train,
Glory awaits him on the plain of Troy.

N E S T O R.

But here, here stranded at wierd Aulis,
Fell Artemis exacts her pledge.

U L Y S S E S.

The death of the King, O prodigy!

IPHIGENIA

NESTOR.

My thoughts I dare not voice. Time and the
hour

Alone will tell. I am aweary.

[*Exit.*]

ULYSSES.

Now am I sobered. Here is food for thought.
Shall this great armament be stalled perforce,
Impounded by the wrath of injured God?

Then farewell dream of a united Greece

To be both feared and courted by the world.

Nestor, I thank thee. It shall not, must not be
All Hellas here assembled to disrupt

Again into its petty fragments.

What e'er the price, on whom the blow shall fall
That shall be paid. Ha, Calchas, meetly come.

[*Enter Calchas.*]

CALCHAS.

Undone, I am undone—

Hither alone to meditate—

The consuming plague, the callous calm—

Nor day nor night, nor sleeping nor waking,

Nor food nor drink for me.

Hast thou forsaken me Phoebus Apollo?

ULYSSES.

Calchas.

CALCHAS.

God of the silver bow, when did thy altars

Want savory feast, the purple wine, the fumes

Of smoking incense—but thou inexorable.

IPHIGENIA

U L Y S S E S.

Calchas.

C A L C H A S.

Deny me not Sun-god.
Am I unworthy of thy favor?
I am thy Priest at Pytho,
Did I not serve thee faithfully?
Out of my mouth thou spakest prophecy,

U L Y S S E S.

Calchas.

C A L C H A S.

Ward off the deadly arrows, son of Zeus.
Restore the stricken Greeks to goodly cheer,
Fill their impatient sails with swelling wind
To Troy, to Troy,—O hear their prayers and
mine.

U L Y S S E S.

Calchas, hear me.

C A L C H A S.

Ulysses, thou, I sought a sign.

U L Y S S E S.

Foolish seer, what avails tearful supplication?
Neither wind nor weather answers thee.
Impatient of thy fruitless effort
The army murmurs, the irreverent mock.
Thou hast lost favor with Apollo.

C A L C H A S.

No, no, always the priest of Phoebus Apollo.

IPHIGENIA

ULYSSES.

But in thy worship of the Delian god,
No kindly word hast thou for his twin sister.

CALCHAS.

For Artemis?

ULYSSES.

Aye, she, fair Artemis, who shares with him,
Her sun-crowned brother, whom thou servest
 long,
The sending of plagues and calm when offended,
Propitiated she averts the evils.

CALCHAS.

Ah.

ULYSSES.

Know you the soil whereon you tread?
Open your eyes, clairvoyant.

CALCHAS.

True, true great Ithacan,
In Euboea is Artemis all powerful.

ULYSSES.

Now search the hearts of those who follow here.
Mayhap there's some, perchance but one
Who in his time the gentle huntress hath of-
 fended.

CALCHAS.

Ha.

ULYSSES.

I've heard a tale, but let it pass,—
'Tis neither here nor there,—an idle tale.

IPHIGENIA

CALCHAS.

Most worthy princeps I am all impatience.

ULYSSES.

Tut, tut, good Calchas, tis but half remembered,
And then it may do harm to the all powerful.

CALCHAS.

The King! Not Agamemnon?

ULYSSES.

But thou art greedy, did I say Agamemnon?
I named not Agamemnon, yet
This fable does concern the King.

CALCHAS.

Speak man, you torture me.

ULYSSES.

Well, well, if I must say,—but no
I'll wrong no man.

CALCHAS.

Of its importance let me pass opinion.

ULYSSES.

Then have your way, some do make light of it.
On Mount Cithaeron you recall,
A noble shaft of Parian marble, lo
These many years bears graven letters thus:—
“Hermione, beloved of Artemis,
Gored by her sacred stag.”

CALCHAS.

The marvel of the age,
A priestess perish by the goddess' beast.

ULYSSES.

The legend is a lie.

IPHIGENIA

CALCHAS.

A lie?

ULYSSES.

'Twas Agamemnon's spear that pierced the maid.
Proclaim, has Artemis just cause for ire?

CALCHAS.

The omen of the swan,—the sign at last.

[Enter a drunken disorderly mob of soldiers and camp followers, brandishing weapons and staves. With Thersites at their head, they make for Calchas. He retreats, protected by Ulysses.]

THERSITES.

Where is the dog-faced priest, Calchas?

SOME.

There—there,— strike, strike.

OTHERS.

Death to the deceiver.

OTHERS.

False priest, tear his limbs—

OTHERS.

Rend him, kill him, stone—

ULYSSES.

Ye impious herd, ye sullen brutes,
I'll flay the first who stirs.

THERSITES.

Who befouls us here, 'stinking in disease?

ALL.

Calchas!

THERSITES.

Who starves us on stale bread?

ALL.

Calchas.

IPHIGENIA

THE SITES.

Who fools us with lies?

ALL.

Calchas.

SOME.

Forsooth, Apollo's mouthpiece.

[*Derisive laughter.*]

ALL.

Kill the cheat.—

To hell with the imposter who stopt our way to
Troy.

[*They close around Ulysses and Calchas.*]

ULYSSES.

[*Striking them with his sword*]

Ye drunken offal,—the dogs shall feast tonight.

[*Enter Agamemnon, Menelaus, Nestor in state
accompanied by the Greek chiefs and re-
tinue. The mob is driven back by the
King's heralds.*]

AGAMEMNON.

What means this turmoil which disturbs our
peace,

Our noble cousin,—what is the matter?

ULYSSES.

Calchas—

AGAMEMNON.

Calchas again. Forbearance in us ceases

Unhappy priest, when our valiant troops are
wrought

To mutiny—

IPHIGENIA

MENELAUS.

At Aulis, stubborn seer, have we submitted
For endless days for a prophetic word
That would unloose the winds to waft our ships
Triumphant on to Troy.—To Troy where I
Impatient burn to punish lecherous Paris.
But I must eat my aching heart in anger
While fretting at your impotence.
[*Murmurs of approval.*]

Hither in response to my royal brother's call
The princes orgulous have all assembled
Accompanied by their tried and eager bands.
Already should our thousand shimmering sails
Have spread the sea with a white canopy.
Already on the plain of distant Troy
Our soldiers marshaled for the grand assault,
Already Ilium's walls been breached with blows
And Priam humbled with his shameless folk.
This is our purpose,—for me the fond embrace
Of my stolen Helen, for the victorious
The sack and spoil of golden Ilium.
[*Renewed murmurs of approval.*]

Shall all our hopes be dashed to nothingness.—
Shall Ilium boast in scorn the baffled Greeks,
How stranded on a barren isle they chafed
Inglorious through a froward priest?
[*Murmurs growing louder.*]

I rage at thought,—were it not the sacred fillet
Of Apollo binds thy brow—

SOME.

Death to the traitor.

IPHIGENIA

OTHERS.

Death to Calchas.

HERALDS.

Peace, ho.

AGAMEMNON.

Let not thy anger, noble brother,
Overleap calm prudence, Calchas shall before
The assembled Kings make answer to the
charge.

Not in rashness but in judgment shall the doom
Be spoken as the dicasts shall decide.
If there 'tis proved that you deceive,
That you do trifle with the Greeks,
Your divinations false, you die.

ALL.

Hail Agamemnon, King.

SOME.

Death to Calchas.

CALCHAS.

[*Prophetically, after regarding Agamemnon.*]
Before high altar on Cithaeron's height
I see Hermione enthralled, enthralled,—
Her eyes uplifted in a rapturous gaze,
Her face illumined by adoring love,
Her rosy arms outstretched in fond embrace,
Her bosom heaving with a sensuous joy.
In sweet embrace, entrancing exaltation,
She holds communion with chaste Artemis,
Chaste Artemis, who never knew a man.
Within those amorous arms the virgin yields,

IPHIGENIA

Whom neither god nor mortal e'er defiled,
And revels in that sweet, insatiate love.

[*Agamemnon approaches Calchas.*]

But now, a horrid sight, as from the sky
Zeus unexpected hurls his thunderbolt,
A hurtling arrow hisses through the air,
And on the altar sinks Hermione,

The bloody shaft impaled within her heart,—
While at her feet exhausted, panting, flecked
With foam a royal buck falls in his throes.

[*Agamemnon under the spell approaches nearer,
dropping his spear.*]

The thicket parts apace, into the open
Flushed with eager eyes a god-like youth
Springs forth to seize his prey. Grim horror
shakes

His limbs as on the awful havoc of
The chase his eyes arrest. With quaking knees
He calls the gods to heed his solemn vow,
In expiation will he consecrate
To outraged Artemis for his rash guilt,
The fairest, dearest of his heart's possession.
[*Agamemnon approaches closer letting fall his
shield.*]

Lo, weary years have marked that fateful day,
The much offended goddess long forbearing
Has vainly bided for the promised gift.
[*Agamemnon very close to Calchas.*]

At Aulis sacred unto Artemis
The sender on the Greeks of calms and plagues,
What great atonement, Agamemnon, King,
Shall pay thy long forgotten debt to her?

IPHIGENIA

AGAMEMNON.

[*Despairingly.*]

Iphigenia?

[*Falls.*]

[*Under the hypnotic influence of the priest, Agamemnon becomes visibly agitated. With quaking limbs, as a suppliant he involuntarily approaches the transfigured Calchas. Horror is depicted upon the faces of the assemblage. Murmurs are heard as Calchas proceeds, but subside as Agamemnon falls in a swoon at the feet of the priest at the conclusion of the prophecy.*]

CURTAIN.

IPHIGENIA

THE SECOND ACT.

SCENE I.

The interior of Agamemnon's tent, lighted by lampteres and torches and hung with skins and bright rugs. The King's standards and arms scattered about. The King seated at a table writing, heaped with sheets of papyrus,—about him evidence of disorder. Talthibius booted for a journey.

AGAMEMNON.

The hour?

TALTHYBIUS.

Night pales into the glimmering dawn.

AGAMEMNON.

So late. Patience, good fellow,
The letter 's almost writ.

TALTHYBIUS.

Since starlight have I attended,
Summoned in all haste.

AGAMEMNON.

Yes, yes—Ere this dispatched. You see
How earnestly I've striven the careworn night.
What have I done,—I am not well.

TALTHYBIUS.

My lord, I've watched you write the letter,
And you would blot the lines and then rewrite.
Once, sir, you finished and did seal with nervous
hand,

IPHIGENIA

Then break the seal, erase and write again.
And in a fit of anger mixed with tears
Did grind the tablet underneath your heel.

AGAMEMNON.

Irresolute through love and fear I wavered.
But now resolved. Takthybius shall dismiss the
army.

TALTHYBIUS.

My lord—

AGAMEMNON.

Each man to his home, no further ear
To Menelaus and Ulysses.
My beauteous child, my first born Iphigenia,
To lure thee hither under pretense of marriage.
Better to idle in sweet-scented Argos
Than lord with cankerous heart o'er gold-limned
Troy.
You tarry,—go, go—

TALTHYBIUS.

The letter, my lord.

AGAMEMNON.

Ah, yes, the letter. This packet to Argos—
You are faithful to my queen and to my house.
Its contents I'll reveal, less perchance waylaid,
That you may declare what I have written here.
"Beloved of Agamemnon:—Send not our daughter
"Hither to pent up Aulis, as thou wert bidden
"By my former dispatches. We have considered
well
"And will delay the nuptials of our child

IPHIGENIA

"With prince Achilles till another time."
[*Agamemnon seals the letter and hands it to Talthibius.*]

TALTHIBIUS.

I'll speed.

AGAMEMNON.

The light grows white. Speed, speed, for every
path
May be beset against thy going out.
Nor rest until this message to the queen.

[*Exit Talthibius.*]

My heart is quaking lest the swift wheeled car
Bearing my Iphigenia is drawing nigh.
[*Immediately the sound of a struggle without the
tent. Agamemnon transfixed with fear.*]

TALTHIBIUS.

[*Without.*]
Forbear, my lord, forbear.

MENELAUS.

[*Without.*]
What, you resist me.

TALTHIBIUS.

Detain me not—the King's errand.

MENELAUS.

The letter, dog.

TALTHIBIUS.

I'll yield it not.
[*Enter Menelaus and Talthibius struggling,—
the latter disheveled, with clothes torn, with
them, Ulysses following.*]

IPHIGENIA

MENELAUS.

[Wresting the letter.]

Presumptuous beggar, go.—Who is the master?

TALTHYBIUS.

Great King,—he does thee wrong. I am distraught.

[Exit.]

AGAMEMNON.

How darest thou?

MENELAUS.

I dare expose thy cunning.

Shall I to the chiefs with thy double dealing?

AGAMEMNON.

Shameless man to persuade a villainy.

But now I am myself. I spurn thy counsel.

MENELAUS.

Now blows he hot, now cold. 'Twas ever thus;

To-day most eager—tomorrow indifferent.

A fickle mind that veers with the weather cock.

AGAMEMNON.

You wrought on me—

MENELAUS.

Let me recall: When you irresolute

Halted in your ambition to be leader

Of the Greeks, how humble to accept my counsel.

Then gracious taking hold of every man's

Right hand, lavishly keeping open door,

Fawning on those in power, courting the rabble

With blandishments to purchase popularity.

That power obtained, thanks to my diplomacy,

How changed in mien. Reserved. Your friends
ignored,

IPHIGENIA

Quite pompous and so distant to your brother.
Ye gods, what peevish trick good fortune plays
With petty politicians. Thus, I charge
You first with base ingratitude.

AGAMEMNON.

Your slander I protest.

MENELAUS.

At Aulis as the general of united Greece,
And here becalmed, to whom did you appeal
In your distress, but me? Or when the troops
Began to clamor, whom did you implore
But me?

AGAMEMNON.

My brother's counsel should I not invite?

MENELAUS.

Again, when Calchas with a seer's clairvoyance
Recalled your crime and vow to Artemis,
And in the recess of your privacy
Announced to you your daughter's sacrifice
As an appeasement for the longed-for winds,
Who lusting for the flesh of Troy, agreed
To offer up his child and of his own
Accord, not by compulsion,—deny me not,
I call Ulysses to witness,—a message sent
To Clytemnestra to convoy his daughter
On pretext of a marriage with Achilles?

AGAMEMNON.

Ha, my ambition that annoys—

MENELAUS.

Now double dealing, sending letters here,
In contradiction of your first resolve.

IPHIGENIA

Forsooth, this man does make pretense to honor
But who betrays his state by artful cunning.

AGAMEMNON.

Shall I bear your taunts unmoved,—Ulysses
what

Would you to a rebellious brother?

ULYSSES.

Unwilling witness to this wordy strife,—
Nor boots it to fan passion between brothers.
A sore condition which confronts us all,
As men to meet the crisis it behooves.
And he who by the will of gods is placed
Both King and man has oft a double burden,—
The affairs of state, the general weal as King,
The emotions, passions, interests of himself as
man.

Happy that prince whom fate has thus contrived
Between himself and state there be accord.
But who of men or gods in ken of man
E'er won a glorious name whose chiefest claim
Was such indifference? The hero's cast
In harder mold, and in the crisis he
Must quickly choose between the public weal
And his own private woe.

Thou art great Agamemnon the rim and center
Of our Greek world, the King and general
Of our united armament. The youth
And flower of Greece are here enrolled for
what—

To bring a faithless wife unto a doting spouse,
To avenge the private wrong of Atreus' son?
Such petty feud belongs to family pride.

IPHIGENIA

The rape of Helen stained all Greece,
An insult to our national pride,
An invitation to barbarian lust
To come and pluck the honor of fair Greece.—
This score must be repaid an hundred fold
The dastard Trojan at his own hearthstone.

AGAMEMNON.

To all thy sophistry I answer No.

ULYSSES.

The greater the sacrifice the greater the boon.

AGAMEMNON.

Wouldst have me slay my child! Unnatural
man!

ULYSSES.

Being asked I proffered my opinion.

[Exit.]

MENELAUS.

Alas, alas, I wretched have no friends.

AGAMEMNON.

Thy overweening madness is thy enemy.

MENELAUS.

Flaunt not thy sceptre, betrayer of thy brother,
Thou now betrayest Greece.

[Exit.]

AGAMEMNON.

I breathe again the air of a freeman.

[Distant sounds of pipes and drums, a lively quickstep heard,—shouts of "Hail Achilles" etc. The troops are heard drawing nearer, then departing accompanied by acclaims.]

IPHIGENIA

[*Enter messenger travel stained.*]

Ho, what would you?

MESSENGER.

Great Agamemnon, King, with effort I
Outran the smoking chariots, announce
The princess Iphigenia whom thou bidst
Me fetch—My lord, thou art not ill,—so pale—

AGAMEMNON.

O,—ye avenging gods!

MESSENGER.

Hard by they rest beside the sparkling fount
To refresh their dust-stained travel, and the
Queen,
Clytemnestra—

AGAMEMNON.

Clytemnestra—didst thou say Clytemnestra?

MESSENGER.

Thy gracious queen, my lord, bid me prepare
Thee for this coming.

AGAMEMNON.

O wife, O daughter mine!

MESSENGER.

A happy reunion and a joyous interlude.
For as I ran, a swift report passed through
The camp, and the multitude came tumbling out.
Some caught me by the kirtle,—“Is marriage on
foot?”

“What’s on?” some asked. “Has the King a
yearning for

IPHIGENIA

"His queen and daughter to bring them here?"

Others,

"To beguile our plight a spectacle of mirth

"Is planned." But Calchas, I heard muttering,

"Initiate the virgin unto Artemis."—

Ill, my lord, you are deadly pale, you tremble.

AGAMEMNON.

Leave me—leave me.

MESSENGER.

Such joy is sudden and affects the heart.

AGAMEMNON.

What fetters have I forged. Malicious fate

Has trapped me far too clever. How address

My wife, how face my blameless child!

MESSENGER.

No more I marvel men do call thee blest,

Whose affections higher than the vaulted sky,

And deeper than the mighty sounding sea.

But rouse, my lord—the shouting multitude—

Put on thy kingly crown, thy robes of state,

Thy sceptre here, thy royal staff and wand.

This day is joyous through the Argive camp.

[*Messenger leads Agamemnon into the interior of his tent. Acclamations are heard, the trampling of many feet, the neighing and stamping of horses, the grinding of heavy wheels.*]

[*Without the tent calling*—Agamemnon, thy wife, thy daughter, come.

[*Enter several chiefs, attendants, soldiers.*]

IPHIGENIA

SOME.

The King? Where is Agamemnon?

SCENE 2.

The review grounds. Chariot containing the Queen and Iphigenia, other wagons containing attendants, waiting women, gifts and the like, which are displayed by the waiting women and attendants to the admiring chiefs and soldiers. Soldiers noisily acclaiming. The principal Greek chiefs pay their respects. Clytemnestra descends from the chariot giving a hand to Menelaus and Nestor. Iphigenia descends with the aid of Ulysses and Ajax. Others attend the waiting women, some unyoke the horses.

THE SOLDIERS.

Welcome, thrice welcome.

SOME.

Gracious lady.

OTHERS.

Welcome—Welcome.

SOME.

Hail, the princess.

OTHERS.

The noble Queen. The beautiful Iphigenia.

SOME.

Hurrah, Agamemnon's wife and daughter.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I regard as good omen your acclaim and your kindness.

IPHIGENIA

SOME.

Long live Clytemnestra.

OTHERS.

Hail, hail.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[*To Menelaus and Nestor*] Noble kinsmen I
thank you.

[*To Iphigenia.*] My child, descend with care.
Fatigued?

Long the way and rough the roads to Aulis.

IPHIGENIA.

[*To Ulysses and Ajax*] My hand to you, sirs,
first I give.

ULYSSES.

Gentle princess, may it not be the last .

IPHIGENIA.

[*To Clytemnestra*] Are you weary, mother,—
see you my father?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[*To attendants*] Unyoke the sweaty steeds.

[*To waiting women*] Display the silver goblets
and the gold.

[*To others*] The vestments and the carpets.

Agamemnon's daughter brings no paltry dowry.

[*To Menelaus*] Is he well born, a proper man?

MENELAUS.

The day is fair indeed.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Know you this prince of ——— what's his name?

IPHIGENIA

MENELAUS.

Hem, hem,—the King delays.

IPHIGENIA.

[*To Menelaus*] Which of the youth is he?

MENELAUS.

Your father, he is well.

IPHIGENIA.

Is he tall or short, hath he blue eyes or black?

MENELAUS.

The youth of Greece are all thou do'st describe.

[*Moves away.*]

IPHIGENIA.

[*To Clytemnestra*] I can not make my uncle understand.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He's scarcely civil. Where is thy father, child?

IPHIGENIA.

[*To Nestor*] Of what band is he with nodding purple plume?

NESTOR.

The noble Phocian, Captain of the archers.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh.—And this one with dazzling silver casque?

NESTOR.

The Cretan Meriones, a hero famed.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh.—

IPHIGENIA

NESTOR.

And there, the Athenian braves, splendid fellows
With the streaming gonfalons. But you should
see—

IPHIGENIA.

Yes, yes—where—where—

NESTOR.

The heavy armed when they made their stand at
Pylae.
'Tis thirty years ago when we besieged—

IPHIGENIA.

[*To Ulysses*] Where is my father, he tarries
long?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[*To Nestor*] Of the youth who throng attend-
ing here,
Who is named—ah, ah—ah—

NESTOR.

Ajax?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ajax? No, not Ajax.

NESTOR.

Philoctetes?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Philoctetes? The name sounds unfamiliar.

NESTOR.

Who can it be, not Diomedes?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He comes from Thessaly,—a prince, the leader
of—

IPHIGENIA

NESTOR.

From Thessaly, from Thessaly,—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[*To Iphigenia*] Your uncle is ill-bred, and
Nestor is a boor.

[*To Ulysses.*] Where is Agamemnon?

[*Enter Patroclus.*]

SOLDIERS.

Patroclus, hail.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA.

Patroclus!

ULYSSES.

The great Myrmidon.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA.

Myrmidon!

NESTOR.

Know you not the Myrmidons?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Yes, yes, he, the Myrmidon,—captain of the
Myrmidons.

IPHIGENIA.

Achilles, sir, the prince Achilles—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

His name is Achilles.

NESTOR.

Oh, Achilles from Thessaly, from Phthia—

IPHIGENIA.

Yes, yes, where—where—

IPHIGENIA

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Which of these youth,—

NESTOR.

The god-like Achilles, the swift-footed—

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA.

Yes—yes.

NESTOR.

Um—um, he is not here.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not here?

IPHIGENIA.

Where is the Prince Achilles, good Ulysses?

ULYSSES.

Ah, here he comes within thy father's train.

[*Sennet sounded. Enter Agamemnon in robes of state, with Achilles and other princes in resplendent dress. He is loudly acclaimed.*]

ALL.

God-like Agamemnon, King of men!

SOME.

Hail, General of Greece!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O thou great light, beloved, we came as bid,
Ever thoughtful of our happiness.

IPHIGENIA.

I embrace thee, father, after weary months.

IPHIGENIA

AGAMEMNON.

Beloved wife and daughter, I—

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, furrows in thy cheek, brows knit, came we
Too slow? We hurried with the swiftest horse.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Uneasily thou doest regard us both.
Thy eye is hollow, thou are surely ill.

IPHIGENIA.

Not angry, father—

AGAMEMNON.

A King and general has many cares.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A truce to cares.

IPHIGENIA.

Give thyself up to me, we'll have a holiday.

AGAMEMNON.

Altogether with thee am I concerned.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Noblest of men.

IPHIGENIA.

Best of fathers, relax thy frown,— come, smile.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Open thy eyes with joy,—thy daughter's marriage.

IPHIGENIA.

The happiest day for me.

AGAMEMNON.

Joy—happy day—

IPHIGENIA

CLYTEMNESTRA.

On us the eyes of all are fixed.

IPHIGENIA.

They stare in wonder at thy strange behavior.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not ill, yet do'st thou tremble,
Where fled the color from thy cheek.

IPHIGENIA.

Dear father.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Arouse thyself. Who are these gallant youth?

AGAMEMNON.

[Recovering himself.]

Ah! Gentle princes to you I do present
The queen,—my daughter, Iphigenia.

ACHILLES.

To our rough camp, dear lady, fitly come,
A ray of sunshine warming all our hearts.
[To Iphigenia] Poor entertainment here for
thee, fair princess.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah sir, we have brought sunshine rare,
And gloom shall seek his deepest, darkest lair.
[All laugh.]

IPHIGENIA.

To meet so god-like youth is joy enough.

ACHILLES.

But once within our lines not lightly shall you
go.

IPHIGENIA

IPHIGENIA.

Fie—fie—

ACHILLES.

The spoils of war.

IPHIGENIA.

A prisoner! I bring a truce.

ACHILLES.

When beauty comes as hostage we are firm.

IPHIGENIA.

Then sir, I'll join your goodly company,—
What office shall I have? [*Laughter.*]

ACHILLES.

Ha, ha, ha, ha,—Perhaps as Hebe fair,
Goddess of youth, to keep our spirits high,
Renew our courage, lift our hopes with draught
Of nectar from the brimming cup.
Like gods we shall disport beneath thy smiles.

IPHIGENIA.

To Ganymede such office I resign. [*all laugh.*]
Choose yet another.

ACHILLES.

As Iris bright, swift messenger to Zeus,
Shall you be listed on our company's roll,
The rainbow with its glistening hues, your tent,
And all our vows to heaven shall you bear.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh sir, your complaints so heavy I would faint. [*all laugh*]

IPHIGENIA

ACHILLES.

Ah lady, I exhaust my stores,
No man was born to match a woman's scorn.

IPHIGENIA.

So easily disarmed, my lord?

ACHILLES.

Unhorsed, disarmed, I kneel a suppliant.
A captive bind me to thy chariot.
And I will grace thy triumph, Amazon. [*all laugh*]

IPHIGENIA.

Now you have named me rightly, Amazon. [*all laugh*]

But not to vanquish, but to aid the Greeks,
A thousand sighs and prayers for your weal
I bring as contribution to this armament.

ACHILLES.

Ah mighty queen, each sigh a phalanx strong,
Each prayer a squadron tried, with these thrice
armed
Are we. What foe can meet our shock of war
With thee within our hearts to spur us on.

IPHIGENIA.

From now I am Hippolyte.

ACHILLES.

Hippolyte!—Not that virago's face,—
Iphigenia shall redeem our race.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[*Coming forward*] Come gentle sirs and you,
Achilles, here

IPHIGENIA

Beside us sit. [*To Agamemnon*] Now I am
well disposed

To thy selection.—[*To attendants*] Bring the
minstrel and the wine.

The sweet-toned singer shall discourse his
verse.

We'll have these rugged soldiers laugh away
The wrinkled cares of state and war's alarms.
[*Attendants spread cushions, skins and bright
rugs. They dispose themselves on the car-
pets. The soldiers in the background.*]

MINSTREL.

[*To Clytemnestra*] What shall it be, how Zeus
overcame Briareus,—

“Now Zeus with awful frown
That shook the battlements
Of high Olympus down”—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The King is sad,—no tale of blood and carnage.

MINSTREL.

A Love song then,—
“Hail Aphrodite fair,
Whose swan white breast
The lover's fond despair”—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Reserve all such for the marriage feast.
A merry lay—

MINSTREL.

A bacchanal,—
“Ho for the wine cup,
Bacchus fill the liquor up”—

IPHIGENIA

CLYTEMNESTRA.

One for the camp,—that song,—
Poseidon and the stolen shoon.

MINSTREL.

Oh merrily I'll troll that forth. [*strums*]
"First to great Zeus, lord of creation
This purple wine, a sweet libation.
And to the gods of high and low degree
A silent prayer, a pledge of fealty."
[*Strums—then after a pause*]
I'll sing a merry song
When gods were young and gay,
When gods were young and gay,
And love was in their hearts
And pleasure in their way,
And pleasure in their way.

Then went they forth to see
The world how it was run,
The world how it was run,
For on Olympus high
They never could have fun,
They never could have fun.

Poseidon he went first,
He was so very sly,
He was so very sly,
He stole swift Hermes shoes
So like him he might fly.
So like him he might fly.

But when he put them on,
His feet flew in the air,

IPHIGENIA

His feet flew in the air,
Head first he tumbled in
The ocean dark and drear,
The ocean dark and drear.

And next Hephaestus tried
To scale the slippery moon,
To scale the slippery moon,
But missed his hold and fell
And broke his ankle bone,
And broke his ankle bone.

Then Ares with his spear
Went forth to pick a fight,
Went forth to pick a fight,
But Bacchus filled his stoup—
He was in sorry plight,
He was in sorry plight.

[*ad libitum.*]

[*Chorus*]—

We'll sing a merry song
When gods were young and gay
And love was in their hearts
And pleasure in their way,
And pleasure in their way.

[*During the minstrel's recital, accompanied on his lyre, shouts of laughter greet the familiar camp-song. Many join in the refrain. Attendants serve cups of wine liberally. The curtain descends during the laughter and singing.*]

CURTAIN.

IPHIGENIA

THE THIRD ACT.

On the banks of a beautiful stream, shaded by ancient oaks, its grassy knolls interspersed with wild rose and other flowers. The sea in the distance gently rolling and breaking on the shingled beach. Agamemnon's pavilions discerned near by.

[*Achilles and Iphigenia seated.*]

IPHIGENIA.

Speak, speak again of love, no music sweeter.

ACHILLES.

In thee my rapturous soul does mirror
As with my thirsty eyes I drink my fill
Of thy fair face more lustrous than the sun.
Thou art the measure of my greatest joy,
The aspirations of my dearest dreams.
Such tender eyes, such voice, such laughter,
O how they touch and vibrate every heartstring,
Exquisite pain that knows no rest for me,
That haunts my dreams at night, my waking
hours.

IPHIGENIA.

And pressing lips to thine, how am I thrilled,
Speak but a word, my blood delicious swirls.

ACHILLES.

Ah rapture this which men call love,

IPHIGENIA

The gods have named it true Elysium.
Entranced by this subtle witchery
I am enthralled not seeking a release.
Such soft and silken meshes love does spin,
A web so thin and fine no eye can pierce,
Yet who would break this soothing amorous net,
Were it an iron gyve that binds the limbs?

IPHIGENIA.

O, thus discourse my hero, my adored,
Thy thoughts I feel ere yet thy words are spoken.
Ah what is love,—I loved thee passion strong
Before I saw thy face or knew thy name,
A restless yearning, something unexpressed,
A groping, seeking for that I did not have,
A void within my heart, a feeling undefined,
Mysterious, calling for its complement.
But when my eyes first caught the glint of thine,
Like quickened spark that from the flint is struck
They fired the flame which burns my inmost soul,
And love long lingering leaped within my own.

ACHILLES.

I saw thee first, as some sweet vision rise
Out of the sea, in glorious womanhood,
My eyes were dazzled by thy sunny hair
Reflecting golden sunbeams in its sheen.
Within my heart a flood of quickened warmth
Overmastering leaped to speak awakening love.
But how to tell thee with a single glance.
Wert thou a rose, then I the hungry bee
Would feast my famished heart caressing thee.
Wert thou the sky, then I the kissing cloud.

IPHIGENIA

Wert thou fair earth, then I embracing sea
Would hold thee ever in these circling arms.

IPHIGENIA.

So, like a timorous bird I'll nestle near,
All tremulous with every leaf that shakes,
Delicious fear that makes my heart afraid
To find within these arms a refuge safe.

ACHILLES.

This fluttering breast I'll press so gently here.

IPHIGENIA.

What breath so rude shall bruise my tired
wings?

ACHILLES.

Who shall but breathe to make thy eyelids wince,
I'll strangle as I did the lion's whelp
Which ravaged bloody through my father's
herds.

IPHIGENIA.

O not of carnage nor of pain discourse,
My gentle prince, all tenderness, all love.

ACHILLES.

True, true, my love,
No shadow shall obscure this golden day,
This day so large of joy to thee and me.
Is not this world full-bloom with happiness?
See this wild rose, how wreathed in winsome
smiles,
Each dainty petal dimpling her bright cheek,
To woo a passionate kiss from wandering moth
Who reels a drunkard from th' voluptuous feast.
Or catch the measure of this rippling rill

IPHIGENIA

Purling in music through this mossy rift,
What soothing song she sings the livelong day
The smooth-faced pebble fondled to her breast.
Or hear the laugh of ocean rolling in
Disporting like a white frocked harlequin,
Tumbling fantastic on his white sand floor
To please us in his sportive comedy.
Ah sweet, for us who look through eyes of love
The gods make all things fair.
We are attuned to joy like sweet stringed harps
Whose chords when touched give forth melodious strain.

IPHIGENIA.

My harper touch these lips all tremulous,
I'll have sweet music thrill me once again.

ACHILLES.

This kiss, and this, a seal, what man shall break?

IPHIGENIA.

Attested by such oath, in heaven recorded.

ACHILLES.

The gods to witness.

IPHIGENIA.

[*Laughing*] Thy testament thou 'rt making?

ACHILLES.

Ah, love, you bring me back to earth,—
What would you have me choose, a life
Inglorious long or one crammed full
Of honor but of short duration?

IPHIGENIA.

Achilles, I do tremble!

IPHIGENIA

ACHILLES.

Nay, nay, my love, 'tis but a passing jest,
My blessed mother had such foolish fancy.
In her maternal fear lest harm befall
She shut me when a child among the daughters
Of good king Lycomedes. [*laughter.*]
O I was passing fair in girlish kirtle
With ribbands streaming in my red-brown hair,
And therefore known as Pyrrah. [*laughter.*]
Perhaps till now with my sweet cousins cloistered,
Had not Ulysses, cool and crafty fellow,
Disguised as peddler, come to spy our nunnery.
And there the rascal found me out,—his purpose—
By mixing shields and arms amongst his dresses,
I seized the shields, he seized me incontinent.—
I lost my sisters, but he won a soldier.

IPHIGENIA.

And shall Ulysses seize thee yet again,
And I be widowed like thy cousins fair?

ACHILLES.

Not till he has contrived more cunning trick,
With chaff he'll catch me napping nevermore.

IPHIGENIA.

A man of wiles.

ACHILLES.

His snares shall not spread home.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy home—

IPHIGENIA

ACHILLES.

A nest that's hid by Phthia's crags,
Where tumbling waters sing a lullaby,
Where towering pines in greenish livery clad
Stand sentinel to guard this mountain pass.
There shall we hie, within that dovecote coo.

IPHIGENIA.

Alone with thee—

ACHILLES.

Alone, yet not alone,
For there are voices sweet, endearing voices,
Womanly voices as of woodland nymphs,
When zephyrs whisper through the leafy ash,
And echo answers from the purple hills.

IPHIGENIA.

And I shall hear—

ACHILLES.

How from yon thicket Pan peeps mischievous,
With eyes aglow and smiles that flit and come,
He spys, unseen, some shy alluring nymph,
And pipes a tuneful lay to charm her ear.
But she with coyness mocks his amorous song,
Eludes with laughter all his baffled skill.

IPHIGENIA.

A happy land where love and laughter reign.

ACHILLES.

Thrice happy land for thee—
Joy in its sun kissed vales, its snow-capped peaks,
The breath of tingling life runs riot there
Sweet with the incense of the morning dew.

IPHIGENIA

IPHIGENIA.

For me—

ACHILLES.

For thee,
A carpet there is spread of violets,
And fragrant parsley, love, where thou shalt
tread,

And crocus flower will lift its radiant head
To kiss thy shapely foot. I see thee wife
And mistress of my house, where thou shalt
comb

White wool and ply the distaff, weave the web.
And I the spear, but thou the spindle whirl,
The bow belongs to me, the hearth to thee.

IPHIGENIA.

My home—

ACHILLES.

Yea, mine and thine,
All that I have thou shalt be mistress of,
My oxen, beeves, my goats, my fleecy sheep,
My fertile fields grain-nodding in the wind,
My milk white mares, my mules for baser use,—
As queen thou shalt be hailed by Myrmidons.—
Ah lady, hast thou seen my Myrmidons,
Bold mountaineers with limbs like hard grained
oak,

Swift as the tireless hound, sly as the fox,
Fierce as the eagle screaming shrill defy,
Brave as the hunted lion brought to bay,
Their courage proved on many a battlefield?
Hast thou not heard of their skill in archery,
As hurlers of the discus without peers,

IPHIGENIA

In wrestling famous, with the cestus feared,
Horse-tamers and in the chariot race the first?
Ah, what a spectacle for thee I'll plan
To celebrate the marriage games.

IPHIGENIA.

When we are mated—

ACHILLES.

Farewell to Mars.

IPHIGENIA.

My father—

ACHILLES.

He must contend Troyward without Achilles.

IPHIGENIA.

I would not have thee thus inglorious.

ACHILLES.

What, what so sudden parted.—Only to taste
The brim. I'll drain the cup to its lowest lees.

IPHIGENIA.

When trumpet sounds I'll buckle on thy armor,
Thy flaming sword—

ACHILLES.

For thee alone, I'll draw.

IPHIGENIA.

I am Agamemnon's daughter.

ACHILLES.

Thou shalt be Achilles' wife.

IPHIGENIA.

When Greece and duty call be thou the first.

IPHIGENIA

ACHILLES.

O glorious woman, thou shalt raise my banner,
To what great deeds, what sacrifices I
Am equal when thou pointest out the way!—
I scent afar the battle's dust and carnage,
The hot blood pouring on the crimsoned plain,
The frenzied soldiers striking, hewing, falling,
Dark clouds of arrows blinding sun-lit day,
War chariots gory rattling o'er the field,
The thunder hoofs of horsemen in wild charge,—
Where fight is thickest there shall be Achilles,
Thy face before me flaming victory,
Thy voice exhorting gods and countryland.—
Daughter of kings, where is thy royal father?

IPHIGENIA.

My father!

ACHILLES.

Quickly to him I'll speed
To ask his favor on our plighted troth.

IPHIGENIA.

To ask his favor, how now, my lord,—methought
My father's message spoke of thy proposal?

ACHILLES.

Um, um, I have no clear recollection.

IPHIGENIA.

Scarce three days old! Oh, I am quite dum-
founded,
Wherefore in hottest haste, am I drafted here
A conscript? Thou didst not seek my hand,
Didst not bespeak my father. Nay?—No—No?—
I relish not this cruel jest.—Oh, can

IPHIGENIA

There be another, are there Achilles here
By half a hundred? Oh, I feel my cheeks
Aflame. Thou laugh'st, thou mock'st. 'Twas I
who sought

Thee, thee, not thou the impatient lover.—
Ah, you shall woo me yet a long, long time
Ere, ere—Achilles take me in your arms.

ACHILLES.

Sweet hyacinth, here at my breast hide them,
Thy crimson blushes, see, I pluck them all.
If thy royal father in his scheme designed
To wed thee to Achilles, never had he planned
A better stratagem. My heart's o'erthrown,
I'm vanquished by thy smile, myself undone,
I do capitulate.

Yet for a counterbuff, tomorrow thou
Shalt be proclaimed, Achilles' wife.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy wife, tomorrow?

ACHILLES.

Tomorrow, in all pomp and circumstance
I'll lead thee to the altar veiled and crowned,
With blare of trumpet, hymns of joyous strain,
With loud huzzah from thousand valiant throats.

IPHIGENIA.

Tomorrow!

ACHILLES.

A soldier's bride, Achilles' wife.

IPHIGENIA.

Tomorrow!

IPHIGENIA

ACHILLES.

Aye, aye, tomorrow, a span, a wink of time,
Twixt sunset and sunrise, hair's breadth.

IPHIGENIA.

Tomorrow is eternity.

ACHILLES.

So are the stars eternity, and yet
They flame and love, and love and flame as fresh
Tonight as yesternight.
So has our love lived in the inky past,
Immortal flame forever brightly burning.—
Now haste I, sweet, unto thy father,—nay
Shall I not go?

IPHIGENIA.

O stay, my glorious sun, that I may warm
My heart a little longer.

ACHILLES.

Nay, nay, hold me no more.

IPHIGENIA.

Out of thy presence what a dreary world,
Sunless and joyless.

ACHILLES.

Through darkest cloud I'll burn my way to
thee.—
Now to thy father.

IPHIGENIA.

Shall I not cling unto this sturdy oak?

ACHILLES.

Sweet scented vine,

IPHIGENIA

Thy tresses weave ten thousand tendrils round,
Deep rooted in my heart.

IPHIGENIA.

Wouldst thou uproot them?

ACHILLES.

Wouldst cause me pain to see thee droop and
die?

No, like the King's own wand of oak
Bright with the hue of winding flowers,
Together, hand in hand, we'll go
To seek thy sire.

IPHIGENIA.

Such wand the heralds bring, denoting peace.

ACHILLES.

A lasting peace and friendship we cement,
The house of Atreus blending into mine,
The herald's wand, a symbol of our troth.

IPHIGENIA.

Thus go, my hero, seek the King,
My smile to light thy way,
This kiss to speak thy plea.
Impatient I begrudge each lagging moment
That steals thee hence, Achilles, fare-you-well.

ACHILLES.

A fond adieu.

[Exit]

[Enter Clytemnestra and handmaid with the
bridal dress.]

IPHIGENIA

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The wreath, the net, are they prepared,
The bride's dress ready?

HANDMAID.

E'en to the silver latchets of her shoe.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Nothing forgot? Show me the robe.
Here place a loop, and here more fulness.
The veil's too short. Here must be draped,
So. 'Tis better.
Well, well, I'll give you further order.

[*Exit Clytie.*]

Bewitched What's the matter, what has
happened?
Blushes, confusion?

IPHIGENIA.

A god has charmed me. He loves me.
Dearest mother, I am happy.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Tut, tut, so rashly hast forsworn thy heart?
A princess' love should not be lightly won.
When Agamemnon came to sue my hand
He cooled his ardor many a day in chafing.
But then young girls are different nowadays,
They're even bold enough to do the courting.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy chiding with my kisses I will stop,
I know full well thy heart is overflowing.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Well, he's a proper man in birth and prospects,

IPHIGENIA

We need not be ashamed to call him son.
He is the Prince of——well, I can't remember,
I learned much after many queries.
For this has been a busy, busy day,
With all the cares and worries on my shoulders,—

Thy bridal dresses, linen, gifts and silver,
No mother ever dowered daughter better.—
Ah, but your father, child, he is a puzzle,
He does insist that I at once return
To Argos ere thy marriage celebration.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh no, no, no, no, no, I will entreat.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And then so churlish, inconsiderate—

IPHIGENIA.

His heart like thine surcharged.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He rages like barbarian.—

IPHIGENIA.

Ah, he is sorely tried, the army—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

There comes he now with frowns and brows distracted.

[*Enter Agamemnon, agitated.*]

IPHIGENIA.

[*Throwing herself in his arms*] O best of
fathers, say 'tis but a jest,
Thou canst not wish it, truly, that my mother,
My dearest mother, and thy wife and queen,

IPHIGENIA

Shall not be present helping at my nuptials.
For who will bear the marriage torch but she?
Such is the custom and my fond desire.

AGAMEMNON.

When I command shall I not be obeyed?
Who is the master here? It is improper
For girls to know some things, and when I bid
Thy mother to return to Argos, home,
I have good reasons,—intercede no more.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, father—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A fig for reasons, are such marriages
Mere trifles, every day occurrence in your house?

AGAMEMNON.

I tell you 'tis improper that my wife
Should mingle with the rabble, a queen to be
gaped
And ogled by the rude and jostling soldiers.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Such puny reasons, pah, fume as you will,
My mind is fixed. Rule well the state and army,
The rest I'll weigh what is discreet and proper.

AGAMEMNON.

Alas, in vain I urge to spare her pain.

IPHIGENIA.

O be not vexed, let us prevail on thee;
Let not the happiest day of all my life
Be marred by faintest shadow,—father smile
On me,—what tears, thy cheek bedewed!

IPHIGENIA

AGAMEMNON.

To part with thee moves me with strange emotion.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Be thou no woman. I'm not insensible—
Come, has the young man signed and sealed with thee
The marriage contract?

AGAMEMNON.

It first behooves to make a sacrifice.

IPHIGENIA.

With Calchas not with us shouldst thou advise.

AGAMEMNON.

Too much with him on thy account I've squandered.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou speakest, father, altogether riddles.
I will confess, nor hold me not immodest,—
It was thy wish, I fell a ready victim.—
Tomorrow with Achilles, please thy pleasure,
Would I be mated. He is gone to seek
And ask thy benediction. Answer me
That I may bear thy message as thy herald.—
[*Agamemnon stares at her helplessly.*]
Then why thus stare, such terror in thy face!

AGAMEMNON.

Is this a time for marriage,—war's afoot.

IPHIGENIA.

Father!

IPHIGENIA

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What juggling art is this, what beast prevails
On you,— are we your helpless sport?

IPHIGENIA.

Father!

AGAMEMNON.

My tender blossom, yellow tresses,
How has this foul campaign scarcely begun
Already proved a crushing burden.
Whate'er I do, howe'er I plead or plan,
What stratagems employ to ward off evil
And shield those nearest, best beloved by me,
I'm thwarted, mocked and overcome.—
Tomorrow wouldst thou marry great Achilles,
[*Iphegenia clings to him in tender appeal.*]
Tomorrow's freighted with momentous care.

IPHIGENIA.

[*Drawing away in terror.*] O father, father,
art thou driveling mad!

Thy dire forbodings augur ill—Achilles—
Achilles dead, my hero fallen, Oh—

[*Enter Achilles excited; on perceiving him, Iphegenia with a glad cry throws herself in his arms.*]

Oh, Oh,

Thy hand, thy cheek, thy lips, safe, safe!

ACHILLES.

What means that dreadful rumor now astir,
What frightful project, King, hast thou conceived?

IPHIGENIA

From mouth to mouth leaps forth the shudder-
ing tale
That thou has lured thy daughter into camp
To offer her fair flesh to Artemis.

AGAMEMNON.

'Tis false,—what perjured tongue has fouled thy
ear?

ACHILLES.

Ulysses, Menelaus, Ajax, all
The Chiefs who hail thee King.

AGAMEMNON.

Ha—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Now is your villainy exposed!

ACHILLES.

When from thy arms released, straightway I
sought

Ulysses. And declared our love, our wedding,
And for a half year thus with thee to share
Before I ventured in the ranks of Mars.

With face beclouded he discoursed to me:

“Hast thou forsworn what I have taught always

“That Troy can not be razed without thy arm,

“Thou bulwark of the Greeks, wouldst thou de-
sert

“Here in the springtime of our state of war?

“Who will remain to spur the warlike youth

“When thou their glass and pattern showst faint
heart,

“Where then the hope of a united Greece,

“Where shall Ulysses find her champion?”

IPHIGENIA

AGAMEMNON.

Like carrion crow he croaks a dismal note.

ACHILLES.

Then on me turning: "Whom seek you to wed,
"Agamemnon's daughter? You indeed are sport
"Of cruel jest. The virgin is betrothed
"But not to you. Calchas will light the torch
"On Artemis' altar, immolating the maid
"That the Greekish host may safely sail away."
Like wounded deer I fled from out his sight
Torn by conflicting doubts, now one, now another,
Menelaus, Ajax, all confirmed the plot.

AGAMEMNON.

My teeth with ague chatter.

ACHILLES.

Thy silence more than bluster does condemn.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Into what hell have you plunged us,
You monster clothed in human guise.

ACHILLES.

Hast thou no word?

AGAMEMNON.

[*Passing his hand wearily over his face.*] I, I—
the victim of relentless fate,
The tortures of the damned consume my bones.
That I devised to harm thee girl is false,—
I say 'tis false.
[*Enter Menelaus.*]
Menelaus, say 'tis false, false, false.

IPHIGENIA

MENELAUS.

My brother, child,
My sin is great, you have I wronged. The curse
Of him who is the elder I deserve.—
A prey to bitterest remorse. 'Twas I
Spurred on by pride and lust spread through the
ranks
That Iphigenia must die. My words like spark
In tinder set aflame a conflagration
No longer to be quenched. The scent for blood
Unleashed a bloody beast now howling for
Its prey. No longer sane but like madmen
The multitude raves for its victim—

ACHILLES.

Oh.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Woe, woe.

IPHIGENIA.

Speechless am I,—this awful doom—dazed,—
To die, to die, did I hear aright, to die?
It shrinks my soul with terror,—no, no.—no.—
My throat is parched,—my lips refuse to speak,
My heart beats loud in violent protest.—
To die, to die, to leave all else behind,
The beautiful world, the joy of life, the sun,
Youth,—love,—the soft caress, the voice,
The pleading eyes, the strong, supporting arm,
To be torn from thee my own, my heart a void,
To wander aimlessly a shade in Hades,
Crying and seeking unconsolated for thee
My husband in that chill and haunted world.—
O pity, pity, is there no pity here!

IPHIGENIA

ACHILLES.

What guilt is hers, whom has she wronged? It
shall

Not be. I'll to the chiefs.

MENELAUS.

Too late, too late.

ACHILLES.

My plea shall cut all argument.

MENELAUS.

In vain.

ACHILLES.

My own command obeys my lightest word,
Courage, my love.

MENELAUS.

Thy Myrmidons will stone thee first of all.

ACHILLES.

Immortal gods!

MENELAUS.

The house of Atreus falls,
The innocents at home as well—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not that.—

MENELAUS.

If Artemis be not appeased. Gladly
I yield my life, but thou, thou Agamemnon
And Clytemnestra and the blue-eyed child
Orestes and the twin daughters in thy palace—

AGAMEMNON.

Rages so the multitude?

IPHIGENIA

MENELAUS.

All will be swept away in unbridled fury.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Welcome death, but spare the innocent.

IPHIGENIA.

A wife I saw myself clasped in thy arms,
All blushing, wistful in my white bride's veil,
The happiest day, the dream of every maid
When husband seals his troth with first-born kiss
And she clings to his lips with life-long love.
But never shall that joy be vouchsafed me,
Condemned to die. O my beloved, beloved,
How dark, how cruel ends this mocking day.

ACHILLES.

By solemn oath, by river Styx I swear
Wife thou shalt be—

MENELAUS.

But not to thee—

ACHILLES.

Who dares deny me that, beware!

MENELAUS.

The army raves, a victim for its lust.

ACHILLES.

My sword shall feed
A thousand bloody corse into its maw.

AGAMEMNON.

Canst thou appal the people's clamor thus?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ha, craven, keen your fear of the mob's favor.

IPHIGENIA

IPHIGENIA.

Here at thy feet dread King, O father, father,
I grovel,—life, life, save me, O save.
The meanest worm let me crawl, but live, live
A slave, an outcast, an exile, a thing reviled,
Shunned by all men as a hideous leper.
O do not slay me, cut me off before
My time. Banish me to some wind swept isle,
Where men are never seen, the haunt of gulls,
Where ocean dismal roars in loud rebuke.
But do not send me down to Tartarus
A shade, a ghost like smoke, a gibbering spectre
Howling and fleeing from my own affright.—
Horror, horror, horror—

ACHILLES.

Ye gods be just,
What penance undergo, what sacrifice
Shall I perform? Demand, I'll freely give.
I'll crook my back into a hideous shape,
I'll gouge my eyes and flay my quivering flesh,
I'll tear my arm from its living socket joint,—
All this I'll do and laugh through writhing pain.
But spare this innocent, this gentle maid
So pure, so beautiful, so dear to me—
Ye gods be just,—tho' earth shall crack and
yawn
Thou shalt not die unwilling.—Hence, away—
The chiefs in council call. Who dare oppose
'Tis treason, treason, treason to Achilles!

CURTAIN.

IPHIGENIA

THE FOURTH ACT.

A plain.—The chiefs assembled. Agamemnon in his robes of state. Beside him Clytemnestra and Iphigenia. Achilles and the princes in full armor. Soldiers in the background crowding forward, interrupting the proceedings. They are kept back by the heralds. Nestor addresses the assembly. The chiefs restless, some approving, others dissenting from the speakers.

HERALDS.

Peace, Nestor speaks.

NESTOR.

Thrice have Achaians proved
How valorous smoked their arms on battle-
field—

SOME.

No more from Nestor. Cease.

OTHERS.

Ear to Nestor.

NESTOR.

Thrice, as I said, have we Achaians brought
Our valorous arms to victory on the field,
And now with honor may we homeward turn
Since gods frown down our more ambitious
quest.
In days of old—

IPHIGENIA

SOME.

Old man, you talk too long.

OTHERS.

O greybeard, stop.

HERALDS.

Peace, silence all.

OTHERS.

Go on.

NESTOR.

Ye gods, what new misfortune threatens Greece,
Will ye then rend each other here in council?
Now hearken to my words,—in days of old
When I did live with men who held me great,—
And they were giants in those times and fought
With gods of mighty strength whose voices
 roared
Like angry bulls—

SOME.

Strike camp at once.

OTHERS.

Home—

OTHERS.

Troy—

SOME.

Our wives—

OTHERS.

Our babes await.

SOME.

Our vineyards rot.

OTHERS.

Our flocks—

IPHIGENIA

OTHERS.

Not we—

SOME.

To Troy where booty waits.

OTHERS.

Our ills for naught—

OTHERS.

With empty hands return—

HERALDS.

Silence, peace ho.

OTHERS.

Shall Nestor not be heard?

IPHIGENIA.

[*To Clytemnestra*] I fear the angry kings, their
wolfish eyes.

[*Agamemnon arises, urged by Clytemnestra to
quell the disturbance, he waves his wand.*]

SOME.

Agamemnon, great Agamemnon speak.

HERALDS.

The King.

AGAMEMNON.

Princes and Captains, with your leave dear
Nestor,

Already this debate is far prolonged.

Nor boots it to extend the parley.

Hither summoned, you have with patience heark-
ened

To wise and reverent counsel, and weighed well
The question of our homeward going.

IPHIGENIA

Not all have spoken, of such I crave indulgence,
Still if I read aright the temper of
Your thoughts, from what has been so well dis-
cussed,

The general mind is for the nonce, resign
Our warlike pomp for more propitious season.
Therefore as king and general of the host
I do prorogue—

[The King's immediate suite arises to retire, chiefs and soldiers frantic with excitement shout their protest. The clamor gains strength, forcing the King and his partisans to remain. Ulysses is called, opposition is overcome, and a universal cry arises for Ulysses.]

SOME.

No, no.

OTHERS.

Forbear.

OTHERS.

A trick.

SOME.

We're duped.

OTHERS.

The army is dismissed. We're off.

SOME.

For home.

OTHERS.

A subterfuge.

SOME.

The King's word 's law.

OTHERS.

Obey the general.

IPHIGENIA

SOME.

We'll have our say.

OTHERS.

Ulysses, speak Ulysses, ho.

SOME.

Speak—speak.

SOME.

Where is Ulysses? Come.

OTHERS.

He shall be heard.

OTHERS.

Hear—hear.

SOME.

Ulysses speaks—

OTHERS.

Hail, Prince of Ithaca!

ULYSSES.

I stand here with embarrassment,—

Agamemnon my name is called.—

If I may differ from the general trend,

It is forsooth my own, my poor opinion.

Many have spoken and given tongue to thought.

I marveled long at Menelaus. How

Magnanimous, tho' smarting with the sting

Of outraged honor, when such as he forbears,

I apprehend why chiefs of high degree

May waiver quitting sun-kissed Greece

To challenge perils on a storm tossed sea.

Such men love life, their ease,

Their pleasures over much.—But I will wrong

Not even these within my thought.

IPHIGENIA

The white haired Nestor you acclaimed. I heeded
well

The wisdom from his honored lips, more sweet
Than honey, lest I lose his eloquence.
As he well said, here at the threshold we
In truth beset by peevish fate, our fleet
Becalmed, our arms fret impotent. But these
Are tests to try stout hearts whose timbers like
Our oak-ribbed ships, more seasoned grow
With ocean's buffeting.—So soon should hearts
Benumb with thoughts of wife and home?
Let him whose roof tree needs his presence more
Than Hellas now depart in peace.—

SOME.

No. no.

OTHERS.

We stay.

ULYSSES.

But I who vowed to cross the wide-spread sea,
Resolve to keep my oath lest I deserve
The scorn of gods and the contempt of men.—

SOME.

I am for Troy.

OTHERS.

And I.

OTHERS.

And I.

ULYSSES.

My country more than life I love, to see
Thee Greece one people, one endeavor,
Knit in a compact of so close a woof
That neither time nor trial shall tear apart

IPHIGENIA

The texture of a single thread.
My countrymen, let me address you thus,
Am I demanding more than can excite
Emotions in your breasts? Let me not judge
You by a baser mettle. For I plead
A nation's cause that lifts a suppliant voice
For unity. What sacrifice too great,
What offering too dear to realize
A Greece united in fraternal bond,
A Greece whose righteous arm barbarians fear,
A Greece the eye and front of all the world?
Had I a thousand lives I'd freely yield,
Yea, to accomplish this. But if my blood
Alone cemented Greece 'twere yours to shed.
Yea, tho' unburied on the Phrygian coast
I go to death, if Greece be Greece, alike
Of friend and foe I only beg that they
Will burn my corse, my armor on and pile
Close to the hoary deep a mound for me.—

SOME.

Ulysses, lead.

OTHERS.

To Troy.

OTHERS.

Delay no more.

ULYSSES.

Are we such tender boys or women widowed
That we appear to shrink away with grief
And languish to return? Where are the heroes
Whom Nestor with his silver tongue proclaimed
All bursting with desire at war's alarms?

IPHIGENIA

Are we their sons, or sprung from spurious sires,
Our blood milk-white within our woman hearts?
No. No. I hear a thousand voices shout,
For Greece, for Greece no sacrifice too great,
That be our battle hymn forever more.

MANY.

For Greece no sacrifice too great.

OTHERS.

For Greece.

SOME.

To Troy.

SEVERAL.

No, home.

OTHERS.

Down with faint hearts.

OTHERS.

Milksops—

[*In the midst of the tumult Menelaus rises to
speak. He is interrupted.*]

SOME.

Coward.

OTHERS.

Cuckold.

OTHERS.

Renegade.

HERALDS.

Peace, ho.

MENELAUS.

Son of Laertes, idly we keep alive
A strife of words which serves no end.
My heart no less impatient than thine own
To cross the white capped seas. For I have cause
That rankles here like poisoned dart, and am

IPHIGENIA

Consumed by the gnawing tooth of fierce revenge.
But gods propitious at the firstling of
Our bold attack frown ominous at further war.
Lured to this place, like eagles snared, we beat
Our wings against the net the gods have spread.
Our rocking ships are mouldering in their anchor-
age,

Our cables rot within the salty waves,
And nightly gleam the funeral pyres with death
As gruesome pestilence stalks through our ranks.
How long remain and hug these cursed shores
For favoring gales? Shall we foolhardy tempt
Almighty gods, yield up our lives for nought?
Much wiser we to turn our faces back
To Greece with all our train, for Troy we can
Not take nor cross the wind-spent sea.

SOME.

No, no.

OTHERS.

Not backward go.

OTHERS.

Forward to Troy.

SOME.

There booty, promised gold.

OTHERS.

Against the gods who can contend.

SOME.

Let Agamemnon make his peace.

OTHERS.

We die, the King's to blame.

IPHIGENIA

SOME.

Appease offended Artemis.

OTHERS.

Shall all Greece perish when one life will save?

SOME.

Who speaks for Artemis?

OTHERS.

Calchas.

MANY.

Ho, Calchas, Calchas, Priest of Apollo.

[*Calchas is dragged forward by the soldiers.*]

SOME.

Say what lustration wash away the plague?

OTHERS.

How fill the fluttering sails with boisterous wind?

CALCHAS.

Not your neglected vows, nor hecatombs,

But broken pledge of Agamemnon.

That which he took from Artemis she asks,

No less, no more in justest recompense.

Hermione her best beloved he slew,

Iphigenia his dearest born demands.

Nor Troy-ward nor Greece-ward shall the host
depart,

But here in everlasting qualm sit till

The debt is paid.

[*Profound silence prevails. All overcome with
awe.—Agamemnon rises.*]

AGAMEMNON.

Prophet of evil, never a cheerful word

IPHIGENIA

For me. To mark the signs of mischief is
Thy great delight. Good do'st thou ne'er for-
tell,

But pratest in thine auguries before
The Greeks how Artemis afflicts us sore
Because unwittingly when in my teens
I slew Hermione. Now to thy face,
I will not yield, nor lead her as dumb brute
Before the blood-stained block, yet ransom I
Will offer of a countless herd, yea gold
And precious stones all that I have, if that
Will soften unrelenting Artemis.

CALCHAS.

Thy pledge is barren. Artemis once fooled
Trusts him no more who broke his word.

THERSITES.

Ha, ha, hear ye.
Only the crowned may insolently defy the gods.
Forsooth shall one poor lamb be spared,
The whole flock perish?

THE SOLDIERS.

No, no, Thersites, we're with ye.

THERSITES.

If Calchas had foretold my child the victim,
That is if I had one, or yours brother,
Or even proud Ulysses' son,
What would happen?

THE SOLDIERS.

What, what, Thersites?

IPHIGENIA

THERSITES.

Already the altar would be plashed with blood,
And groans and prayers drowned in the funeral
dirge.

THE SOLDIERS.

True—true.

THERSITES.

In vain the suppliant clasp the knee of Atreus.
But Agamemnon and his tribe are freed
From such conditions.—

THE SOLDIERS.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, go on orator.

THERSITES.

'Tis such presumption that offends the gods,
• And I and all of ye, by Zeus, must die.

SOME.

If all must perish, Iphigenia too.
Let her atone the guilt, the rest escape.

THERSITES.

Let Agamemnon say,
Why lured his daughter into camp,
If not for slaughter?

OTHERS.

Yield, Agamemnon, the gods have willed.

THERSITES.

For the common folk, I speak, we are impatient.—
To the sacrifice,—young maid prepare.

[*Tumult.*]

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Achilles!

IPHIGENIA

ACHILLES.

Loathsome viper, reptile that crawls,
Long have I nursed my anger through this
babble.

Accursed be he who calls unto the shambles.
To your tents ye dolts, ye cowards all.
Hear what I say,—
Tomorrow by the sacred rites of Hymen
We shall be wed.
Who questions that shall answer me.

THERSITES.

Ho, ho,—the bulwark of the Greeks,
Will he defy the gods?
Down with Atrides, down with Achilles!

THE SOLDIERS.

Death to the brood. [*Tumult.*]

ACHILLES.

Squat-toad, spawn of hell!
Be you the first to whet my blade.
Greet Pluto, wretch, tell gibbering shades
I hurried you blaspheming there. [*Kills Ther-*
sites.]

Who is the next to thwart my path,
[*The soldiers fall back*]
For Greek, not Trojan is my deadly foe.
Perish in plague but Iphigenia shall live.

ULYSSES.

Rash youth, thy foster father I—
Impotent ragest thou against hard fate.
When gods decree, man, puny man, must bow
Nor question their design lest impious

IPHIGENIA

He calls down on his head their awful wrath.
With fear and fury, see, the soldiers blind,
Thy own command will rend thee limb from limb,
Aye, thou the darling of the camp, yield ere
Thy stubbornness shall prove death to us all.

ACHILLES.

Beware, thou fierce and cunning friend,
Thy tongue shall clamor no more woe.

ULYSSES.

Tho' thou art dear to me as my own son,
Yet die thou shalt, that Greece may live.

[*Achilles and Ulysses fight. Their partisans with fierce shouts array themselves in which the King and Achilles are outnumbered. Iphigenia throws herself between Achilles and Ulysses. The tumult ceases.*]

IPHIGENIA.

O men of Greece, forbear, put up your swords,
Let not our country fall in fratricide
And Greece dismembered perish cowardly.
The lowliest here will gladly yield his life
To humble Troy, exalt Achaia.
Should Agamemnon's daughter shrink when
called,
To emulate the vulgar born? I am
My father's child sprung from a race of kings,
A woman weak unused to savage war,
Would that I were his son to prove by deeds
The hero blood which courses through our veins.
But woman as I am I thank the gods,
This fateful day which puts me to the test.

IPHIGENIA

I to redeem my sex, I my country's savior.
If truant Helen shamed the virtuous wife
Let Iphigenia extol Greek womanhood.
If heroes teach me how to live
As woman I will show you how to die.

ACHILLES.

Ye gods, her reason is unthroned,
What frightful spell has wrought this fearful
wrong!

IPHIGENIA.

Never more sane, never more like myself.

ACHILLES.

This beautiful temple shocked, o'erthrown in
ruin.

IPHIGENIA.

Achilles couldst thou understand—

ACHILLES.

Thou a vicarious sacrifice,
Whose cheek no rude breath touched!
Monstrous iniquity!

IPHIGENIA.

Will not the mother in her child-birth pangs
Surrender life to give her infant breath?
Is Greece less worthy of a woman's love?
To me is given to atone a wrong,
To raise all Greece to honor and to power.
Immortal fame is mine when sons of Greece
To unborn generations shall proclaim
How Iphigenia warded her country's plight,

IPHIGENIA

When Grecian daughters proudly lift their
heads
To speak with sacred lips their sister's name.

ACHILLES.

To such self-sacrifice not even gods aspire.

IPHIGENIA.

More than the gods we mortals must endure.

ACHILLES.

And I of thee most cruelly bereft.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou must be strong to bear all human ills.

ACHILLES.

I ask but little, but to me 'tis much,
The humblest man may have a cherished spouse,
To me denied what is a common boon.

IPHIGENIA.

Art thou Achilles? then more brave must be
Than all mankind.

ACHILLES.

Am I not brave,—pit me against a man,
A beast, a demon or a god, I will not flinch.

IPHIGENIA.

To wrestle with thyself needs stronger champion.

ACHILLES.

Must strangle all desire, all hope, all love,
Without thee life is black, a hollow waste.

IPHIGENIA

IPHIGENIA.

Like thee I wrestled with my agony,—
See, I have conquered, I am now serene,
Wouldst thou be strong, wouldst thou be true,
Then set the eye of duty in thy heart.

ACHILLES.

Mortal or goddess tell me what thou art,
To emulate thee is divine.

IPHIGENIA.

What thou art, that am I.

ACHILLES.

O that thy voice were near to cheer alway.

IPHIGENIA.

Within thy heart my voice shall ever ring
Inspiring thee to great and noble deeds.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

My child, my first-born throe—

AGAMEMNON.

My Iphigenia, my dearest hope—

ACHILLES.

My wife, my outstretched arms await—

IPHIGENIA.

Weep not, dear mother, nor thou best of fathers,
Nor you Achilles, I would call my lord.
I am not like other women, wife and mother
To live serene with handmaids in thy house,
To spin, to card the soft white wool, to press
A curly head upon this breast.
But consecrated for a nation's work,

IPHIGENIA

I am the instrument to knit all Greece
And lift my country to supremest bounds.

ULYSSES.

Daughter inspired, I wed thee unto Greece!

IPHIGENIA.

Thy hand, Ulysses, lead me to my spouse,
That Greece may live, let Iphigenia die,
O new born joy, O Greece regenerate!
That I may breathe in you, O men of Hellas,
The hope and courage which exult my soul.
Ulysses come—the consecration waits.

[Iphigenia, her face illumined with a martyr's joy, turns her eyes from Ulysses toward the altar, now disclosed, lighted with the sacrificial flame and surrounded by white robed priests. The scene slowly dissolves from view. The army fades away in the shadows leaving Iphigenia and Ulysses sharply defined in the foreground.]

CURTAIN.



